

## Jungle Bachao Andolan – UPSC Notes

In the early 1980s, the Jungle Bachao Andolan took shape when the government proposed to replace the natural Sal forest of Singhbhum District, Bihar (now Jharkhand), with commercial teak plantations. The Jungle Bachao Andolan movement is said to have originated in **Bihar** and slowly spread to states like **Jharkhand** and **Odisha**.

### Contextual Background

- Jharkhand literally means “**the land of forests**”, and until a few decades ago most of the present-day Jharkhand state, in fact, most of the Chotanagpur plateau, where the young state lies, was covered by dense subtropical forests.
- The Chotanagpur plateau is also home to numerous indigenous peoples (in India called Adivasi) who fought for the creation of a state of their own, a state for the indigenous peoples, covering the historical “forest land”: Jharkhand.
- The Indian government finally conceded, and on 15 November 2000, the present state of Jharkhand was created.
- It however consists only of what earlier formed the southern part of Bihar state, and therefore only a fraction of the historical Jharkhand.
- Today, reserved forests in Jharkhand are also heavily degraded, some even completely denuded.
- In its greed for revenues from timber the Forest Department of Bihar state, right after independence also took control over the management of privately owned forests.
- Over the past decades, communities all over India have started to protect whatever forests remain and to regenerate denuded forests.
- In Jharkhand, the **Jungal Katai Andolan** was launched as early as 1978, as a protest movement against the devastation of forests in the Kolhan-Singhbhum area, mostly inhabited by the Hos.
- The forest rights movement remained particularly strong in Munda and Ho inhabited regions of Ranchi and West Singhbhum districts, and protests continued in a sporadic manner until the emergence of the Jharkhand Jungle Bachao Andolan (JJBA - Jharkhand Save the Forest Movement) in 2000.

## Jharkhand Jungle Bachao Andolan

- Jharkhand Jungle Bachao Andolan (JJBA) was launched as a grassroots movement for the restoration of forest rights of the Adivasi, providing them with a common platform for sharing experiences and coordinating their activities.
- JJBA emerged out of an initiative to launch a campaign for the restoration of forest rights of the Adivasis in Jharkhand.
- The Adivasi communities gathered under JJBA have understood that they can protect their forests in the long run only if their rights over their forests are recognised.

### Achievements of JJBA

- The achievements of Jharkhand Jungle Bachao Andolan (JJBA) go far beyond the goal of “saving the forest”.
- JJBA has also turned out to be a popular movement, through which indigenous peoples are asserting their rights and identities.
- The movement not only has a very clear target (forest rights) but has also developed a simple strategy to achieve it. This strategy is called **Community Forest Governance**. It is conceived as resting on “four pillars”.
- The four pillars include:
  - The traditional village council (Gram Sabha)
  - The Forest Protection Committee
  - The women’s cooperatives
  - The youth forum (Bal Akhra)
- Even though the approach is termed Community Forest Governance, the four “pillars” are representing an encompassing community-based self-governance system combining the traditional self-governance institution of the village council (Gram Sabha) with three new institutions.